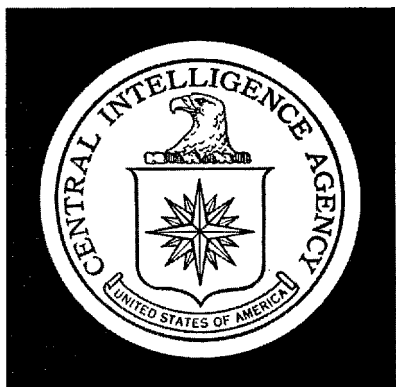


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

MCO

The Situation in Vietnam

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17 May 1967

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Information as of 1600
17 May 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

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I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam:
Heavy fighting is reported near Con Thien as NVA forces continue their pressure against allied positions in northern Quang Tri Province (Paras. 1-8).

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Operation UNION ended successfully in Quang Nam Province after four weeks (Para. 14).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam:
Chief of State Thieu has publicly opened the possibility of his seeking the presidency in opposition to Premier Ky (Paras. 1-4).

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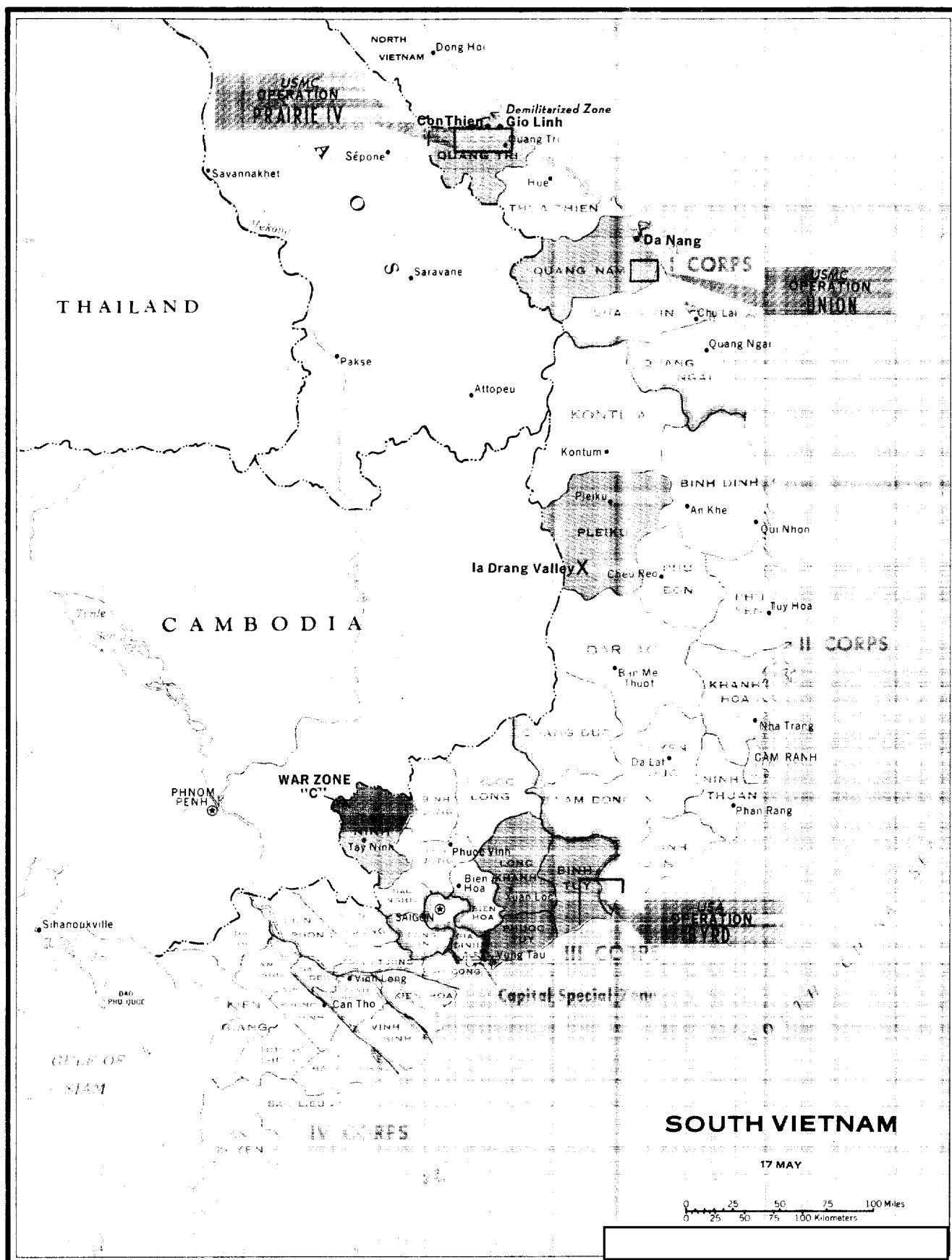
V. Communist Political Developments: The
Hungarian defense minister is reported to have
arrived in Hanoi on 16 May (Paras. 1-2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Heavy fighting between US Marines and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars was reported again on 16-17 May in the northeastern section of Quang Tri Province. Communist forces there are maintaining their pressure on allied positions immediately south of the DMZ.

2. On 16 May, about a mile southeast of Con Thien, a US Marine company of Operation PRAIRIE IV, supported by tanks, engaged an enemy force estimated at company strength for four hours in an area laced with tunnels and many fortified bunkers. A total of 23 NVA soldiers were killed; American losses were three killed and 23 wounded.

3. Simultaneously, just east of Con Thien, another Marine company--later reinforced--fought with a company-sized enemy force which was defending well-prepared positions. More than 70 enemy bodies were counted after the engagement in which 15 Marines were killed and 60 wounded.

4. The US outpost at Con Thien is situated less than two miles from the DMZ. Together with a South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) outpost and a Special Forces camp also located there, it serves as the western terminus of the seven-mile-long barrier presently being constructed eastward toward the coast.

5. According to unverified press accounts enemy defectors have indicated that NVA forces are currently threatening Con Thien on three sides with elements of at least three NVA regiments.

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7. The US position at Gio Linh--one of the 175-mm. heavy artillery sites near the DMZ--was hit on 17 May by 140-mm. rockets, the largest weapon known to be in the VC/NVA inventory. Reports on the effectiveness of the barrage have not been received.

8. This renewed activity could be a prelude to larger and more ambitious plans by the Communists as several significant Vietnamese dates approach. These dates include 19 May--Ho Chi Minh's birthday, 23 May--the anniversary of the birth of Buddha

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Operation UNION Ends in Quang Nam Province

14. US Marines report killing 865 Communist soldiers in an area about 30 miles south of Da Nang in southern Quang Nam Province during the four weeks of Operation UNION which ended yesterday. The two Marine battalions in this search-and-destroy operation, which was targeted against elements of the 2nd NVA Division, had 110 killed and 473 wounded. Enemy losses also included 8,000 uniforms which were found in a supply cache.

Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

15. The week of 7-13 May compared with the week of 30 April - 6 May:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

	<u>30 Apr - 6 May</u>	7-13 May
Attacks	37	57
Battalion or larger.....	2	1
Small Unit	35	56
Harassment	417	379
Terrorism	45	59
Sabotage	11	15
Propaganda	32	10
Antiaircraft	<u>328</u>	<u>205</u>
TOTAL INCIDENTS	870	725

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II. Casualties

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>7-13 May</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>7-13 May</u>
Killed	1,903	1,942	212	257
Wounded	-----	-----	690	547
Missing/ Captured	-----	-----	<u>54</u>	<u>19</u>
TOTALS	1,903	1,942	956	823

	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>7-13 May</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>7-13 May</u>
Killed	273	235	18	9
Wounded	1,747	1,319	26	37
Missing/ Captured	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	2,020	1,554	44	46

III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/NVA</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>7-13 May</u>	<u>30 Apr-6 May</u>	<u>7-13 May</u>
Individual	847	Not	103	143
Crew-Served	<u>50</u>	Reported	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
TOTALS	897		106	147

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. In an interview with an American newsman on 17 May, Chief of State Thieu publicly opened the possibility of his seeking the presidency in opposition to Premier Ky, but stopped short of committing himself. Thieu stressed his belief that a presidential contest involving himself and Ky on opposing tickets would not lead to serious trouble in the army. Prior to these remarks, most military leaders had taken the position that only one military man should run for president. Even Premier Ky, in announcing his candidacy last week, paid lip service to this principle by hinting that he might withdraw if General Thieu chose to run.

2. In the interview, Thieu also declared that he was "actively" seeking to organize a "broad" political front to back his candidacy, and that he thought he could win.

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it appears doubtful that a broad front has been developed. It would seem more likely that Thieu is maneuvering within the military and feeling out a handful of key civilian politicians, some of whom are probably potential candidates themselves. On balance, Thieu most likely feels that circumstances do not yet favor his candidacy.

3. Thieu will probably not commit himself for the time being unless favorable developments or new sources of support for his candidacy materialize. Any developments would have to occur before 5 July, the official filing deadline for presidential candidates.

4. Despite Thieu's public comments to the contrary, open competition for the presidency between Ky and Thieu would effectively divide the political

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power that has ruled South Vietnam for the past two years. At the least, Thieu's current stance suggests that the rivalry which has been built up between Thieu and Ky over the past several months remains as strong as ever. Such rivalry, which does not appear to be susceptible to easy resolution, may not bode well for future military unity, whether Thieu becomes a candidate or not.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

25X1 [redacted]
the Hungarian defense minister
25X1 arrived in Hanoi on 16 May on a Hungarian IL-18
transport aircraft. [redacted]

25X1 2. A visit to Hanoi by the Hungarian defense
chief at this time might be concerned with partic-
ular arrangements surrounding the implementation
and suitability of military assistance programs
previously agreed upon with the Vietnamese--
including arrangements for shipment to the DRV.

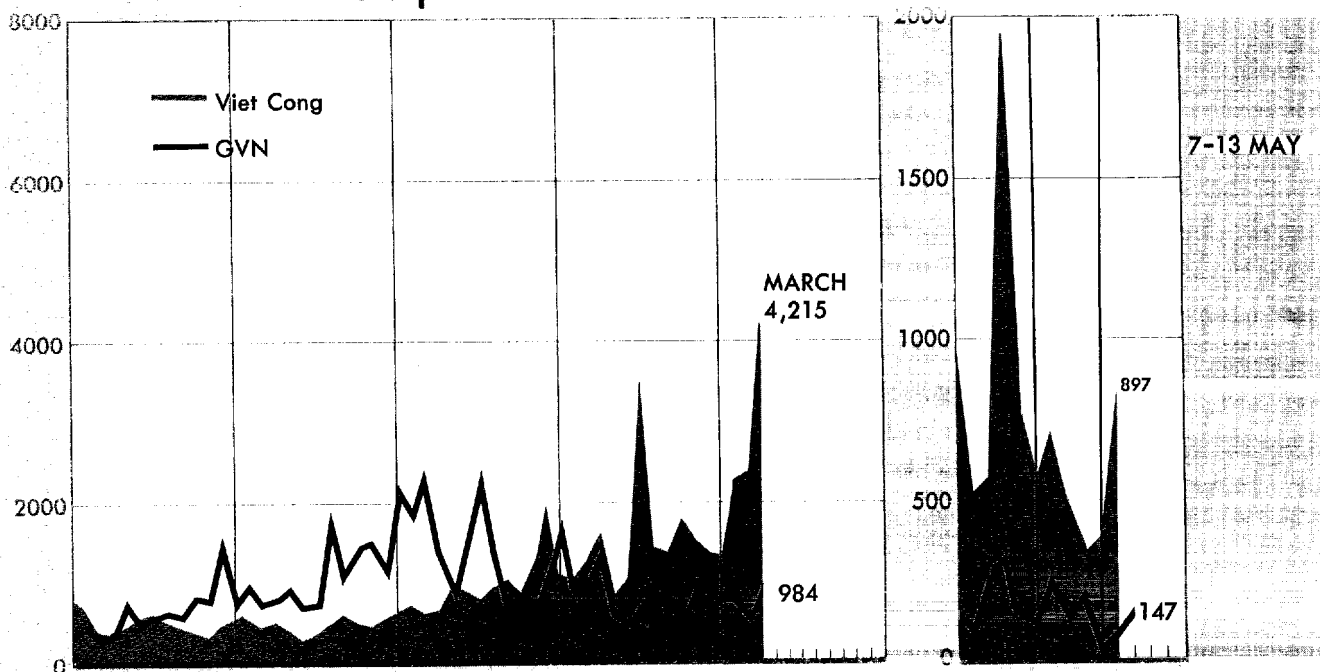
25X1 [redacted] military supplies
from Eastern Europe were included in the recent
agreement on the shipment through China of aid
for Vietnam. Known arms shipments to the DRV from Eastern
Europe have been minimal, consisting primarily of
sport rifles and small bore ammunition.

17 May 1967

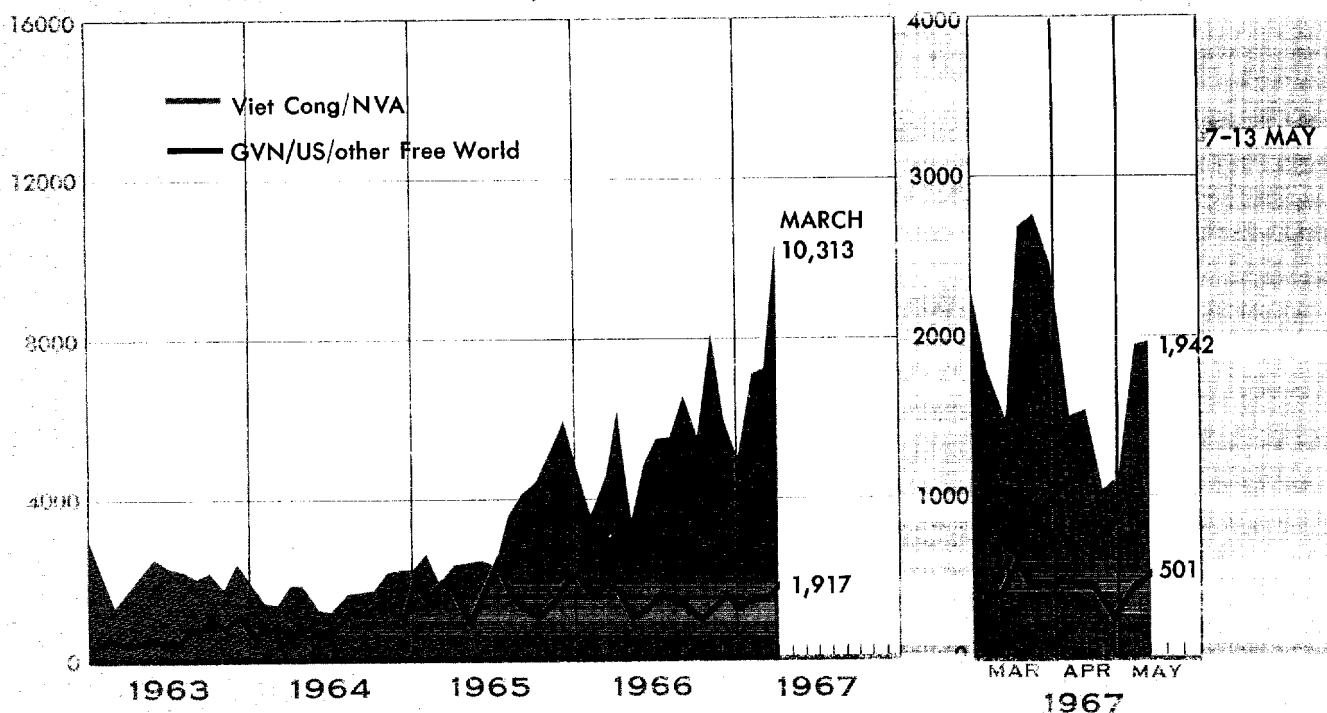
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Weapons Losses



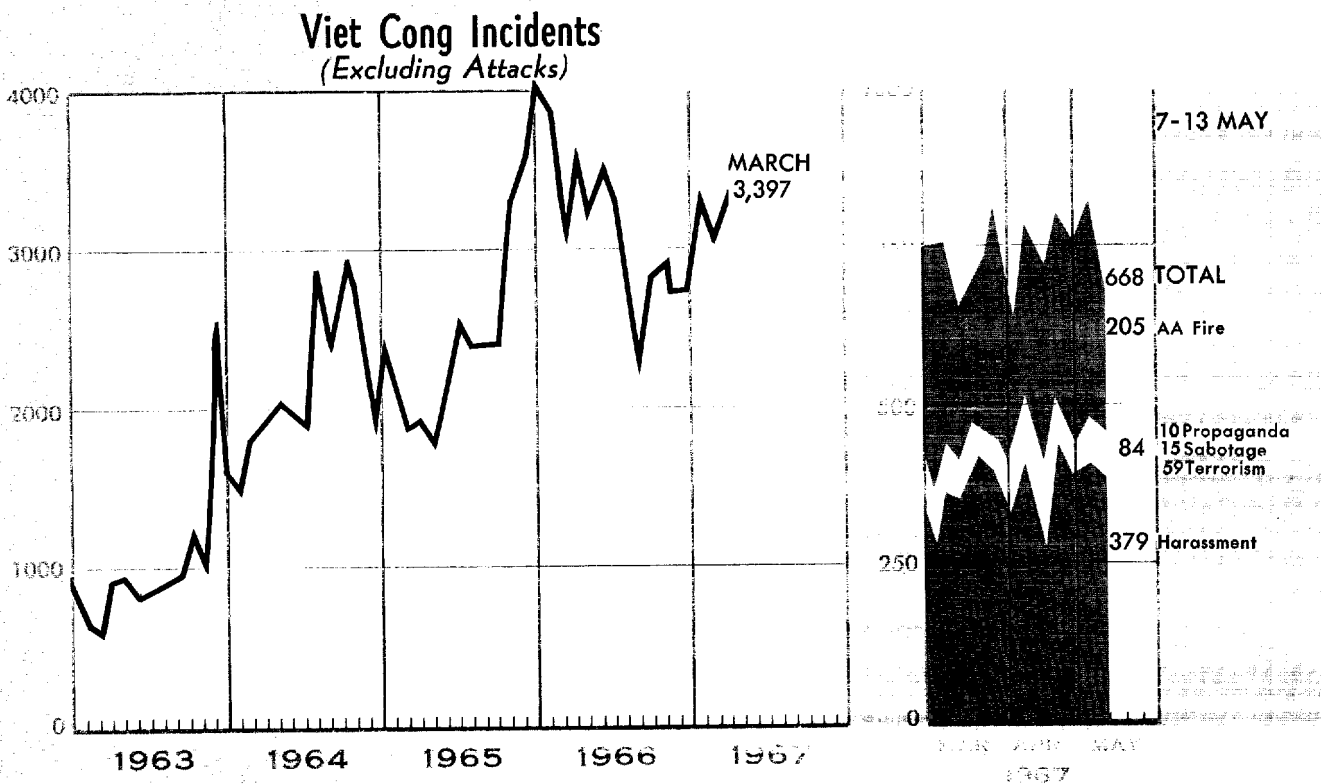
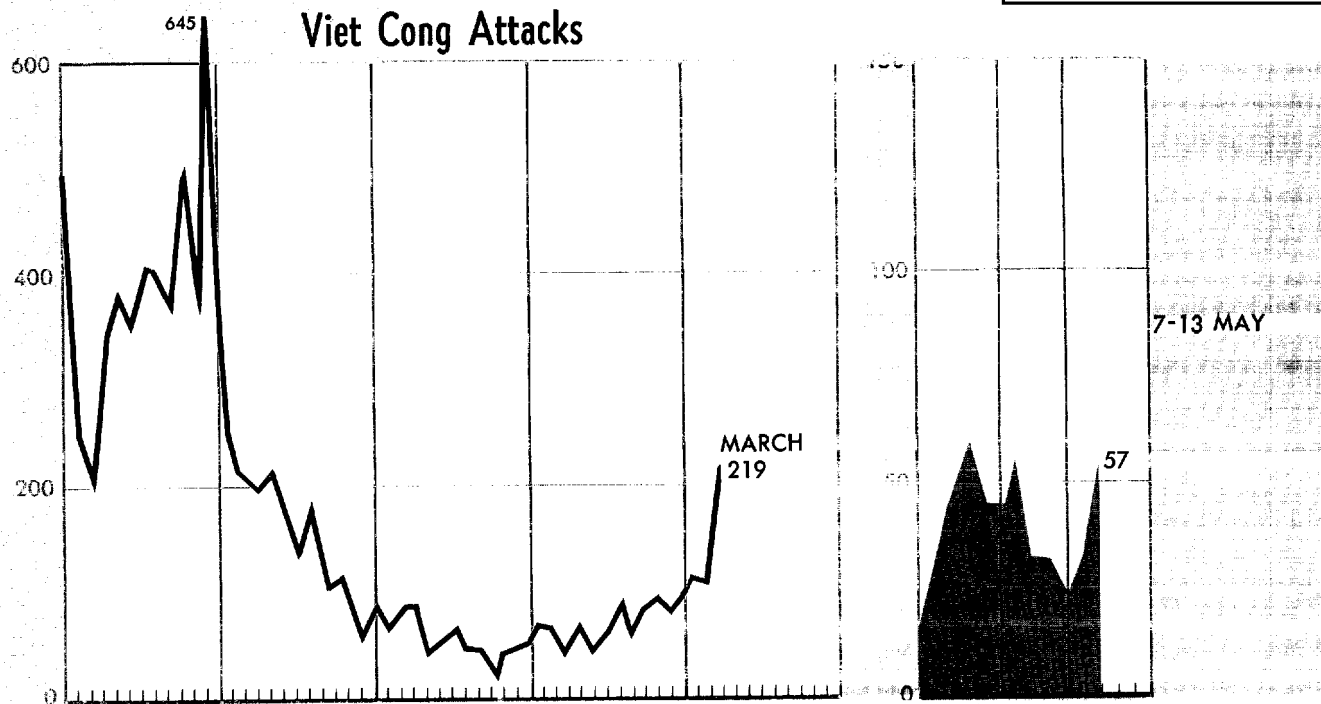
Personnel Losses (Killed only)*



US Casualties to Date: Killed 9,916 Wounded 59,143 Captured 158 Missing 420

*Due to a change in the reporting of personnel losses, beginning 12 February 1967, the weekly figure will represent only personnel killed.

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